

We Claim:

- 1 1. A data processing method comprising:
2 creating a machine readable, abstract descriptive data structure;
3 and
4 using the representation to interoperate with at least one rights
5 management data structure.

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- 1 2. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of formatting at least one part of at least one rights management
3 data structure at least in part in accordance with the descriptive data
4 structure.

- 1 3. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of formatting display of at least one part of at least one rights
3 management data structure at least in part in accordance with the
4 descriptive data structure.

- 1 4. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of formatting reading of at least one part of at least one rights

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3 management data structure at least in part in accordance with the
4 descriptive data structure.

1 5. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of displaying at least a part of at least one rights management
3 data structure based at least in part on the descriptive data structure.

1 6. A method as in claim 1 wherein the creating step includes
2 the step of providing metadata within the descriptive data structure,
3 and the displaying step comprises displaying at least some
4 information from the rights management data structure at least in part
5 in accordance with the metadata.

1 7. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of dynamically generating a user interface based at least in part
3 on the descriptive data structure.

1 8. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of automatically identifying and/or locating at least one data
3 field at least in part based on the descriptive data structure.

1 14. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of interpreting at least part of the descriptive data structure at run
3 time.

1 15. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes the
2 step of dynamically adapting at least part of data processing of the
3 rights management data structure at run time.

1 16. A method as in claim 1 wherein the using step includes
2 using at least part of the descriptive data structure as instructions for
3 driving and automated digital content handler.

1 17. A method as in claim 1 wherein the creating step includes
2 the step of creating at least one integrity constraint, and the using step
3 includes the step of enforcing the integrity constraint.

1 18. In a rights management data processing architecture of the
2 type including a secure electronic appliance that interacts with an
3 application through an interface, a method of interoperating with
4 secure electronic containers comprising the following steps:

5 (a) delivering an abstract data structure representation to the

6 application;

7 (b) generating container access requests with the application
8 based at least in part on the abstract data structure representation; and

9 (c) accessing the container with the secure electronic appliance
10 at least in part based on the container access requests the container
11 generates.

1 19. A method as in claim 18 further including the steps of:

2 (d) providing, with the secure electronic appliance, information
3 from the container to the application; and

4 (e) processing the provided information at least in part in
5 accordance with the abstract data structure representation.

1 20. A method as in claim 19 wherein the processing step (e)
2 includes the step of processing the provided information in
3 accordance with metadata provided within the abstract data structure
4 representation.

1 21. A method of creating and using a secure container
2 comprising:

3 (a) defining a descriptive data structure that generically defines
4 a class of interoperable, compatible container structures;
5 (b) using the descriptive data structure to create at least one
6 secure container;
7 (c) distributing the descriptive data structure to plural
8 electronic appliances; and
9 (d) interoperating with the secure container at said plural
10 electronic appliances by at least in part using the descriptive data
11 structure to locate and/or specify information within the secure
12 container.

1 22. A method as in claim 21 wherein the descriptive data
2 structure corresponds to an atomic transaction, and the method
3 further includes the step of performing the atomic transaction at least
4 one of said plural electronic appliances at least in part in accordance
5 with the descriptive data structure.

1 23. A method as in claim 21 further including the step of
2 independently using and/or providing controls relating to the
3 descriptive data structure.

1 24. A method as in claim 21 further including the step of
2 defining at least one class of descriptive data structure based on at
3 least one parameter.

1 25. A descriptive data structure comprising:
2 first data that at least in part establishes an association between
3 the descriptive data structure with at least one rights management
4 data structure;
5 second data that locates at least some information within the
6 associated rights management data structure; and
7 metadata that at least in part describes at least one
8 characteristic of use and/or access of the rights management data
9 structure.

1 26. A descriptive data structure as in claim 25 wherein the
2 metadata includes at least one integrity constraint.

1 27. A method of achieving a degree of compatibility with at
2 least one secure environment comprising:
3 (a) creating a descriptive data structure;

